



Why Should You Participate?

Why not?

If you live or work in Somerville, you are an important part of the community. Whether you've lived here your whole life, moved here from another country, or come here to continue your education, your experience in Somerville is uniquely your own.

You have a story to tell.

This is a chance for neighbors to speak to one another, for long-time residents to share ideas with new immigrants, and for teenagers to speak with adults — and be heard. It is an opportunity to get to know one another and a way to strengthen our community.

Join us:

*Because you care about your city!
Because you are Somerville.*

The Somerville Human Rights Commission

19 Walnut Street

Somerville, MA 02143

Phone: 617-625-6600 x2165

Fax: 617-625-1023

Email: humanrights@ci.somerville.ma.us



The Somerville
Human Rights
Commission
presents:

The Somerville Conversations 2007

Young Somerville: Challenges and Changes



March—April 2007

Talk! Listen! Understand!

What is the Conversations Project?

Started in 1996, the Somerville Conversations is a series of community roundtable discussions. Residents come together in four facilitated discussions to share experiences and communicate about their hopes and concerns.

Project Mission:

- To promote dialogue between groups that have little contact with one another
- To create relationships between diverse people and build a respectful community
- To encourage residents to learn from the experiences of their neighbors
- To promote leadership and civic participation in our city



How does it work?

Approximately two hundred residents will participate in groups of six to eight people. Each group will reflect the diverse population of Somerville — long-time residents, new and old immigrants, people of all ages and backgrounds. Each group will be led by trained facilitators and will meet for four two-hour sessions during March and April of 2007. Dialogue will center around the changing face of Somerville, and the roles of youth and young families in our community.

Men and women, teenagers and adults — everyone will come out for the 2007 Somerville Conversations!

Young Somerville: Challenges & Changes

For the seventh Conversations, Somerville turns towards the younger members of our community and looks to the future of our city.

With its rich colonial history and strong base of residents with multigenerational roots, Somerville is in some senses an old city — but growing younger by the day.



Youth and young adults between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four make up 46% of the city's residents.¹ But even as young professionals flock to Davis Square businesses, many teenagers in our public schools face shortages in youth programming resources and continuing gang violence. And with over one half of students in our schools speaking English as a second language,² our community's youth presents a unique microcosm of the city's cultural diversity.

How do these groups relate to one another, and how do older residents experience the changing demographics? Has our educational system risen to meet the challenges of immigrant students and racial disparities? How do we as a community support our youth and our young families?



Join us for a Conversations where youth and adults tell their stories and learn from each other about the challenges and changes facing our city.

¹ 2000 US Census

² Somerville SIMS Report. 1 March, 2006.

Somerville Conversations 2007: The Planning Stages

We would love to have you as a Somerville Conversations supporter or volunteer! If you have any questions, please contact us.

Please fill out this form and either return it to the address below or email the information to: humanrights@ci.somerville.ma.us.

Name _____

Organization (if applicable) _____

Phone Number _____

Address _____

Email _____

Check all that apply. I am interested in:

- ☐ Participating in a discussion group
- ☐ Serving as a facilitator
- ☐ Advising or providing input for discussion topics/curriculum
- ☐ Volunteering — event planning and administrative tasks
- ☐ Volunteering — outreach and recruitment
- ☐ Other: _____

Questions/Comments: _____

Thank you!

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